



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

## AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** June 25, 2020

**Agenda Item:** Montana Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan **Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 15 Minutes

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**Background:** The current Montana Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Plan details the 2014 Decision Notice by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks regarding the department's surveillance and response to CWD detections in the state. Proposed to the commission and functionally implemented in the fall of 2017 with Montana's first positive CWD detection in free-ranging wild deer, the plan builds on prior department management plans and adds logistical details for implementation. The draft plan presented to the commission in April 2020 included adjustments based on experience gained through surveillance, testing, management, and outreach efforts since the first Montana detection in 2017. The intent of prior plans and proposed changes remain to: 1) limit the spread of CWD since detection in Montana; 2) maintain or reduce the prevalence of CWD in specific locations once detected; and 3) improve communication and outreach on CWD among the public, other agencies, and the department.

Based on experience with surveillance, testing, and outreach efforts since 2017, most of the proposed plan edits are relatively minor. In addition to an evolving approach to the assessment and prioritization of next surveillance areas, the most significant proposed change is to replace area-specific carcass transportation restriction zones with a statewide carcass disposal requirement that would apply to all deer, elk, and moose carcasses regardless of where in the state they are harvested by hunters or vehicle-killed salvage. In pursuit of a simpler message for the department to communicate and improve understanding, this proposed language essentially requires brain and spinal cord material to be left at the kill site or deposited in a Class II landfill. Another proposed change is to prohibit the use of cervid-derived glandular scents to limit the potential for spread.

**Public Involvement Process and Results:** The department has met with the citizen advisory panel to review implementation experience and how that experience might best guide any adjustments to the plan. The panel supported a carcass disposal requirement and expressed concern over glandular scents. The department met with staff from the Department of Environmental Quality given their authority and understanding of landfills. The draft endorsed on April 23, 2020, was made available for additional public review and comment.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The department received 3 public comments and no opposition. A decision to discard changes and retain the existing plan would limit the department's ability to respond to and possibly reduce prevalence of CWD in new and emerging areas. If changes are discarded, some ability to respond and manage CWD remains. The department believes the proposed amendments will allow it to better address CWD in Montana.

**Agency Recommendation and Rationale:** The department recommends that the commission approve the revised Montana Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan and a prohibition on cervid-derived glandular scents. These proposed changes directly address the intent of Montana's plan.

**Proposed Motion:** I move that the commission adopt the revised Montana Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan, the proposed carcass disposal rule, and the prohibition of cervid-derived glandular scents as presented by the department as final.